(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (f) In order to protect the farmers from unstable prices of agricultural products, the Government takes several measures which include announcement of minimum support prices (MSPs) each season of major agricultural commodities, undertaking price support operations of major agricultural commodities by the designated central nodal agencies under the MSP scheme and using instruments of trade to encourage exports and discourage imports of agricultural commodities, etc. The designated central nodal agencies are required to intervene in the market for undertaking procurement operations in case the market prices fall below the MSPs fixed by the Government. The Government is also implementing market intervention scheme (MIS) for horticultural commodities and other minor agricultural crops which are perishable in nature. The MIS is implemented for a particular commodity on the request of the State Government(s) which are ready to bear 50% of the losses (25% in the case of north-eastern States) if any, in its implementation. The Government has also taken various measures to promote agro export with a view to expand market for agricultural produce thereby helping farmers realize better and more stable prices. Import duties on many of the agricultural commodities have been increased. The imports are being closely monitored and the Government is determined to ensure through proper use of tariff mechanism that imports do not cause any injury to the domestic farmers. Fluctuation in wholesale prices of agricultural commodities are also monitored continuously so as to enable the Government to intervene in the market whenever needed.

Likely reduction in production cost of cotton in USA

†1058. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that production cost of cotton for cotton growers in USA is likely to decrease due to governmental financial aid to them;

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, whether Government have made any assessment in this regard, so far;

(c) if so, the facts in this regard, on the basis of said assessment; and

(d) whether it is also a fact that this would have adverse effect on the cotton producers of India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (d) The Farm and Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, proposes three types of subsidy payments in the cotton sector; fixed decoupled payments, loan deficiency payments and counter cyclic payment. Reports are indicating that the US Farm Bill will have a price depressing effect on world markets.

Amendment to the Seeds Act

1059. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to amend the existing Seeds Act;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is a fact that sometime back, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh made some suggestions to him as to the amendments which Government should carry out to the Seeds Act;

(d) if so, whether the same have been carried out in the draft amending Bill; and

(e) by when the amending Bill is likely to be put in place?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The draft Bill to replace the existing Seeds Act seeks to remove it short comings by, *inter-alia*, providing for regaulation of all seeds, including seeds of non-notified kinds and varieties, compulsory registration of all seeds on the basis of value for cultivation, compensation to farmer if the seed fails to provide the expected performance, more stringent penalties for infringement, etc.